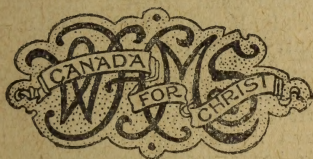


L Byrnes ✓

5

# Greater or Northern Ontario



Woman's Home Missionary Society  
of the Presbyterian Church  
in Canada.

LP  
F5012  
1911  
B995

—1911—

# Greater or Northern Ontario.

---

By Rev. J. D. Byrnes, B.A., B.D., Superintendent of Missions for Northern Ontario.

Every nation has its problems to solve, but, on account of its extreme youth and almost unlimited natural resources, Canada is called upon to solve some of the biggest problems that ever confronted a nation. There is the problem of transportation by railway or water route intensified by the length of her coast line and the extent of her territory; there is the problem of developing vast mineral resources and great agricultural possibilities, of safeguarding forests and fisheries, negotiating commercial treaties, protecting trade routes, and all other problems which every new country must face.

Far reaching as these things are, Canada's biggest problem is the privilege of inculcating the spirit of Christian citizenship into the hearts and lives of the multitudes that are crowding her cities and covering her plains, inculcating that spirit into the souls of Russians, Austrians, Germans, Finlanders, Norwegians, Swedes, Poles, Icelanders, Turks, Hindus, Roumanians, Chinese, Mormons, Mohammedans and a hundred others, until there shall be produced a great national ideal true to the highest principle of freedom and civic righteousness. This is, however, a problem of the state as well as the church, indeed so much is it a national problem that a man's attitude towards Home Missions may be taken as his standard of Christian patriotism. It is the rapid development of the country that makes the task so great, for Canada has had a

prosperity almost, if not altogether, unparalleled in the history of nations. A measure of this prosperity is due to the discovery of vast natural resources in what is called Northern Ontario.

Until recently this territory was practically unknown, except as a barrier separating eastern civilization from western progress; but the sturdy prospector and homesteader passed into the great unknown, and discovered vast mineral areas, some of which are already pouring their wealth into the eager lap of the world, and disclosed great agricultural valleys, "chuck full of wealth to the brim." With these prospectors and homesteaders, our Home Mission line has gone, enlarging our problem by leaps and bounds—a problem made more difficult, for everywhere we meet the man of foreign tongue and strange ideal. Here we have the problems of Foreign Missions, French Evangelization, Social Service and Evangelism, and all other problems of the Church bound up with our ever-expanding Home Mission work.

**The Homesteader.**—The settler who enriches the world by transforming forests into fertile fields is often lonely in his struggle for a home and all that it means. He needs the Master's message to brighten his lonely life, and so does the mother who, in the newer districts, is too often left to train her children without the aid of school or church. A mother once said to me, "You can scarcely realize what it means to have the missionary visit the settlement. I remember the first time one called at my home. I was helping in the barn, and learning who the stranger was, ran to the house, unable to restrain the tears of joy because my prayer had been answered, and at

1245077

last the church had sent a minister to help me train my boy and girl for Christ." Five years before, she had left her cosy home in Old Ontario and come to this country, a bride. Do not incidents like this make one feel like praying, God have mercy on the Church which leaves such a mother for five years without the messenger of Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

**The Lumbermen.**—Lumbering has always played a large part in the industrial life of Ontario; first, along the rivers and lakes in the older sections of the province; later, pushing back into the so-called newer districts. The camp of to-day is quite different from that of a few years ago. The advent of tar paper and other modern methods of rapid building has practically driven into oblivion the old-time "shanty," roofed with "scoops." The camp range has, likewise, crowded out the old-fashioned fireplace, and in many ways the modern movement towards the luxurious life has even reached the lumber camp. Separate buildings are now provided for eating and sleeping, in which the men are better fed and more comfortably housed than in the earlier days of the industry. The life, however, is just as lonely and the temptations as great as ever. For months these men are away in the woods, deprived of home influences and social life which count so much in building a strong, clean manhood.

"Living in camp with men folk, a lonely and  
loveless life,  
Never knew kiss of sweetheart, never caress  
of wife."



Is it any wonder that, when the break-up comes or the drive is in, these men are tempted by the jovial welcome of the liquor shark, gambling fiend or other hound of hell, who stand ready to entice them into haunts of sin, there to "roll," rob and ruin their victims, who, now ashamed to go home, turn back to the camp with its loneliness, and the old life with its sin.

What is the Church doing for our lumberman? Since 1875, when the Rev. D. M. Gordon, then minister of St. Andrew's, Ottawa, and now principal of Queen's University, inaugurated a "mission to lumbermen," the Presbyterian Church has taken a keen interest in this work, sending her message in two ways; first, by the ministers located in the district, many of whom take long drives, sometimes covering a hundred miles, that they may visit the camps committed to their care; second, in the more outlying parts missionaries are appointed who give practically all their time to the work. In this way about two hundred and fifty services were conducted in New Ontario camps during the past winter, with fairly satisfactory results. The visits of the minister are very much appreciated, indeed, there is no one who by monthly visits can do as much for the men as the minister of the locality. He knows the ground, for many of the boys of his own congregation are there, and when he comes they know it is not for money, but to bring a message of friendship and love, together with a goodly supply of reading material and comfort bags, provided by W. H. M. Auxiliaries and other thoughtful friends.

The lumberman's real danger, however, is not in the camp where, because of his isola-

tion, he is comparatively safe, yet this very isolation makes him more susceptible to the allurements of those who lie in wait when the break-up comes. It is when he comes out in the spring that many a fellow falls, and then the minister and lover of men must lend a hand, and the church provide a home or some protection for the boys if this problem is to be solved.

**Mining.**—It was the discovery of valuable minerals which first brought New Ontario to the front, especially when copper and nickel in large quantities were found in the vicinity of Sudbury, and later when the discovery of such rich deposits of silver were reported from the Cobalt district. To illustrate this we give the following short historical sketch:

In November, 1903, at the request of the Provincial Government, Professor Miller investigated the reported discovery of valuable mineral at or near mileage 103 on the T. & N. O. The noted geologist was amazed at the richness of the silver deposits found upon the surface, and reported accordingly to his department. In March, 1904, the first shipment was made, and the camp began to attract some attention, but it was still known as mileage 103, or Long Lake, until one day Professor Miller wrote the word Cobalt on a board, nailed it to a tree, and the baby camp was named. Few thought that the name would so soon become a household word in financial circles. Perhaps it was the quality rather than the quantity of the ore which made the mining world turn its eyes toward Cobalt; at any rate, in 1905 extensive prospecting and some surface mining was done, and twelve more mines added to the shipping list.

Nineteen hundred and six saw the real rush into the camp, when mining began in earnest, and has steadily and rapidly increased, until Cobalt has lifted Canada into the proud position of third place in the silver-producing countries of the world. This camp has, since its inception, produced nearly \$70,000,000 worth of silver.

But as the prospector has pushed on through quiet valleys and over quiet hills, other camps have been discovered, called Larder Lake, Lorrain, Elk Lake, Gowganda, Porcupine, Swastika, Shining Tree and the Kee-Kee country. Of these, Swastika and Porcupine promise to do for the gold market what Cobalt has done for the silver.

An industry which is producing so much wealth naturally attracts a large population. If these people were all of one country and creed, the Church's task would be difficult enough, but when they come from all continents, and are of every tribe and nation, the problem of giving them the Master's message is intensified an hundredfold.

Generally speaking, a mining town may be described as a centre toward which all trails lead; the camp includes both the town and the trails. Here we find some of the cleverest and best-hearted men, a few of them deeply interested in the moral and spiritual welfare of the camp, some are in open opposition to everything clean and Christlike, boldly announcing that "this will be no Sunday school town," others said to have been prominent workers in the home church are now too busy accumulating wealth or claim that they need a rest from religious work, as though the God of the home church was not also the God of a mining camp. Add to this the fact that the

forces of evil with an hundred agencies are organized to defeat the purposes of the Church, and we realize something of the difficulties which the missionary must face.

One of his first problems is to find a place in which to preach. Often he is allowed to use the hotel bar, poolroom or bunkhouse; sometimes a tent is procured, one corner being curtained off for the manse or missionary's room. On Sabbath public worship is conducted in the main part of the tent; but during the week it is turned into a reading-room or rendezvous for the boys, where they often gather around the baby-organ and sing college songs or the hymns of long ago. Here also, if possible, writing material is provided as a gentle reminder of the home letter, that golden cord which holds many a lad back from ruin. The church, when built, is made as homelike as circumstances will permit, not only that the missionary may hold the men who come from the best churches in town and city, and who in the whirl of material prosperity are losing their grip on eternal things, but that he may also help the clever, dissipated class, known as the down-and-outs, or hold the boy who has come to a new country that he may make a fresh start. Everywhere he goes, the missionary helps the men in the camp or on the trail, realizing that the gospel which counts in a mining town is a gospel of labor and love.

“Give him a lift! Don't kneel in prayer,  
Nor moralize with his despair.  
The man is down, and his great need  
Is ready help, not prayer and creed.  
Give like a Christian—speak in deeds!  
A noble life's the best of creeds;  
And he shall wear a royal crown  
Who gives them a lift when they are down.”



Thus in Northern Ontario we have every variety of work between the Old and the New; for example, in the Presbytery of Barrie a number of our fields are either tourist centres or places where there is little prospect of growth, yet too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of the work in those sections of our country, from which the young people are moving out. If they are looked after as boys and girls, they prove to be the men and women upon whom we can depend to establish righteousness in the newer districts. The following extract from the Superintendent's report to the Presbytery may illustrate this kind of missionary effort:

“Muskoka Falls Field (Mr. Wm. Turner, missionary). Sunday, September the third, was spent on this field as follows: (a) Van-koughnet (morning). At this appointment there were sixty present; thirty-two sat at the Lord's table, one young man uniting on profession of faith; the sacrament of baptism was administered to four children; the Sunday school has three teachers and twenty-four scholars. There is also an active Ladies' Aid doing splendid work. The station, in addition to its ordinary contribution toward stipend, has this year rebricked the church at a cost of about \$250. (b) Fraserburg (afternoon). Attendance thirty, seven at the Lord's table, three uniting by certificate and one on profession of faith. The sacrament of baptism was administered to three children, while the Sunday school reports three teachers and twelve scholars. The Ladies' Aid raised some money, which was used for fencing the property and tidying things up about the church. Service is held here once in two weeks. (c) Muskoka Falls (evening). Attendance sixty-five, at

the table twenty-one, five uniting by certificate and two on profession of faith. The sacrament of baptism was administered to one adult and five children, while in the Sunday school there are four teachers and thirty scholars. In addition to their share of the missionary's salary, the congregation has put new siding on the church, installed electric lights and provided for painting, amounting in all to about one hundred dollars. (d) Reay. As this appointment is served alternate Sundays with Fraserburg, I was unable to visit it, but had a conference with the elder, who reported that the work was moving along nicely.

The Muskoka Falls field covers a large district, as the following figures will indicate: Distance from Muskoka Falls to Vankoughnet, 24 miles; Vankoughnet to Fraserburg, 12 miles; Fraserburg to Muskoka Falls, 14 miles; Muskoka Falls to Reay,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles. This means that in order to keep his weekly appointments the missionary must drive over fifty miles. It is also worthy of note that there is no point on the whole field that is touched by either Methodist or Congregationalist."

This is the kind of work that our missionaries are doing in Barrie and North Bay Presbyteries, where although new fields are not likely to be opened up until some of the projected railways are actually built, yet substantial progress is being made.

In Algoma we have the Old and the New. Most of the fields on the Manitoulin Island and many on the north shore were established in Dr. Findlay's day, but the last few years have seen a renewed activity in this presbytery; for example, nine new churches have been built and as many more enlarged or renovated, while the givings of the people have

increased over one hundred per cent., and the value of church property more than doubled.

In Temiskaming, everything is new. Situated, as it is, in this rapidly developing section of Northern Ontario, new fields are opened up every year. There are now ten ordained ministers and eleven students, while five years ago Rev. F. S. Pitts and three students ministered to the whole country. Five years ago there were four churches and one manse, with a total valuation of \$9,000; to-day there are sixteen churches and four manses, worth about \$55,000. In the same length of time the total givings for the support of ordinances have increased nearly 600 per cent.

As Cochrane and Porcupine have been prominently before the public, we take them as illustrations of this rapid growth.

Cochrane.—The first service held in May, 1909; lots chosen, June 24th; church, worth about \$1,800, opened Dec. 5th; first anniversary, Dec. 4th, 1910, saw the church free of debt; January, 1911, Rev. N. R. D. Sinclair, B.D., was appointed first ordained missionary.

Porcupine.—The first service held March 3, 1910; lots selected in August; church opened Jan. 22, 1911; in April, Rev. G. B. McLennan, B.A., was appointed first ordained missionary.

In the big fire of July the churches in both these towns were destroyed. There were many heroic acts and touching scenes in connection with that fire, but perhaps none more impressive than the funeral at the West Dome, where twenty-three persons, including two women and a little girl, perished, and were placed side by side in one large grave, but ere the last sad rite was performed the shades of night had fallen over sparkling lake and black-

ened hill. With uncovered heads the men stood around the grave, while by the dim light of a candle, Mr. McLennan read, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me though he were dead yet shall he live." The service over, the men moved away into the night, perhaps some praying,

"Abide with me; fast falls the evening tide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!"

Shortly after the fire I met with Mr. Sinclair and his managers on the platform of the Cochrane station, and the following day with Mr. McLennan in Porcupine. I found our men undaunted by the terrible disaster and bravely facing the future with firmness and faith. Thanks to the assistance of those who responded to the Moderator's appeal, our work is again established, new churches, bigger and better, are being built, and will soon be dedicated for the good of humanity and for the glory of God.

May we here express our appreciation of the splendid service rendered the H. M. Committee and the Church by the W. H. M. S. This service has been given in many ways, of which we mention only two:

1. The Stephen Childerhose Memorial Fund.—This fund was established shortly after the tragic death of our late Superintendent, whose knowledge of and consecration to the work made him not only an outstanding man of the North, but one of the strong leaders of the Church. A life so clean and noble knows no death, consequently his spirit lives and moves and has its being in ten thousand hearts



throughout this great northland. After his death it was found that in order to secure "sites" and establish churches before land values had advanced in the newer towns, he was often forced to use his own money. To meet this need the W. H. M. S. established "The Stephen Childerhose Memorial Fund," a fund from which small loans without interest may be procured for a limited time in order that church lots may be secured and the work inaugurated. When a sufficient sum is realized and efficient methods of administration arranged, this fund will be of great benefit to the Church.

2. The recent action of the society in taking as auxiliaries those faithful Ladies' Aids and other organizations of women which are doing such splendid work on our mission fields, has opened up avenues of opportunity, the results of which cannot be estimated; to say nothing of the inspiration that must come to our sisters of the North when they realize that they are considered a vital part of the W. H. M. S.—that nation-wide movement of women which is doing so much to win Canada for Christ.

**The Outlook.**—Starting at Sault Ste. Marie, settlers are going in along the Algoma Central, which is opening up a new country. On the Soo branch of the C. P. R. there is steady growth and much promise. In the vicinity of Sudbury and north along the C. N. R. large activities are pending in the development of the rich iron deposits of that district. Travelling the T. & N. O. into the Cobalt country, we find a camp producing over sixteen million dollars' worth of silver per year, and paying over nine millions of this in dividends. Then there is Porcupine, which gives reasonable promise of being one of the richest gold camps

yet discovered. All of which points to the fact that no man can estimate the untold wealth hidden in those everlasting hills, or determine the outcome when the whole country from Cobalt to Kenora shall have answered the knock of the prospector's pick.

There are many, however, who believe that the future of Northern Ontario does not necessarily depend upon its wooded hills and moneyed mountains, but upon the agricultural possibilities of its great clay belts. Already settlements and towns are established along the T. & N. O. to Cochrane. Land is also being rapidly taken up along the G. T. P., which for hundreds of miles passes through what is said to be one of the richest valleys in the Dominion. Again, the C. N. R., in the connecting link of its transcontinental line, will open up the valley of the Sturgeon, and from Sellwood enter the twenty-million-acre clay belt, running twenty to fifty miles south of and paralleling the G. T. P. to Port Arthur.

What does it mean to have these railways running through the country, opening up mineral belts and agricultural valleys? What does it mean to have this country brought, as it is being brought, by private investors and confederated boards of trade, into the limelight of public enterprise? It means that by the development of Northern Ontario, in the comparatively near future, there will be no break in settlement between the East and the West. It means more: it means, if the Church is to keep pace with the problem of ministering to the millions of every tribe and nation who will call this country home, she must have such an aggressive missionary policy as to make ample provision of money and men for carrying on her work.

To do this work efficiently the salaries of our men must go up to twelve or fifteen hundred dollars per year. Some ask, Can this be done? We believe it can, and will be done. Just as soon as the Presbyterian Church in Canada realizes the greatness and the glory of the task and realizes that every dollar invested in missions will pay huge dividends in good citizenship and Christlike character, she will rise in her strength and give as the Lord has prospered that the Master's message may be sent to her own sons and daughters and to the multitude of strangers who are crowding her gates.

The problem of men is the big factor in any institution, whether church or state. The Canadian navy may reject seventy-five per cent. of those who apply, because of the cigarette-heart or moving-picture eye. We trust the volunteers for mission work are of a higher type, as almost every man must be pressed into the service.

It is here that the problem of missions becomes the problem of the home. Dr. C. W. Gordon estimates that from one thousand to fifteen hundred additional missionaries will be required during the next five years. Where are they to come from? Why not from our Canadian homes? The Spartan mother sent her son into the battle with the injunction, "Come back with your shield or on it." Is the Canadian mother less patriotic, less true to a high ideal? Surely not, but catching the vision of this great national opportunity, like Hannah of old, the Canadian mother will place her boy upon the altar of her country and her God. Nor will the young people refuse this task because it is difficult, because it is almost impossible to keep pace with the development

of the country into which people are pouring at the rate of 1,000 per day, because the service must be performed in lonely prairie town or Godless mining camp. We believe that the young manhood and womanhood of to-day are thrilled with the bugle call to battle, knowing that the more difficult the task the greater the opportunity to fight the good fight, and always remembering that

“God has His best things for the few  
Who dare to stand the test.  
God has His second choice for those  
Who will not have the best.”

J. D. BYRNES.

October, 1911.